and "new [market] entrants." Likewise, the Commission itself declined to adopt the suggestion of Nextel and others to impose differential regulation based on a carrier's alleged market power. No commenter has provided any justification in this proceeding for departing from the consistent treatment of all CMRS providers.

VII. EQUAL ACCESS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN A MANNER THAT MAXIMIZES CONSUMER CHOICE

The comments confirm that the Commission should implement requirements that minimize customer confusion and maximize competition. The success of equal access in the landline market, and the familiarity of customers and carriers with the processes employed to implement equal access there, support the use of those rules as the model for the ones to be imposed on CMRS. Adoption of similar rules in this proceeding will enhance consumer choice.

The Commission should reject the proposals for less-than-equal access put forward by some commenters. <u>First</u>, equal access must include 1+ presubscription <u>and</u> the ability to reach interexchange carriers through the dialing of access codes. <u>85</u>/ Alone, however, the latter is not

 $[\]underline{81}$ See Conference Report at 490-91.

<u>Second Report and Order</u> at 1473-1474. Once again, Nextel also argues for an exemption from equal access requirements for "non-dominant" CMRS providers. The Commission has squarely rejected drawing a distinction between "dominant" and "non-dominant" providers for purposes of forbearing from regulating CMRS providers. <u>See</u> pp. 8-10, <u>supra</u>.

^{83/} Cf. LDDS at 15-20; Bell Atlantic at 12; Rochester Telephone Corporation at 2.

More specifically, the consent decree negotiated by Justice Department, AT&T, and McCaw in connection with AT&T's acquisition of McCaw offers a paradigm for implementing equal access in the CMRS context.

^{85/} AT&T at 9, n.13; Allnet at 5; MCI at 8; LDDS at 16; Ameritech at 2; NYNEX at 9.

sufficient. To the greatest extent possible, the equal access plan adopted for CMRS providers should use the same presubscription, balloting and allocation requirements that were applied in the landline market. Second, equal access should be made available to roamers as well as subscribers in their home systems.

Finally, to avoid undue customer confusion and to minimize network redesign and regulatory disparities, any equal access plan should use LATAs (together with exceptions where they have been granted) as local calling areas instead of the myriad serving areas now used by CMRS providers. While several commenters argue in favor of the largest possible local calling areas, adoption of such a proposal would significantly limit the benefits of equal access by enlarging the proportion of a customer's outgoing calls that would be carried or routed by the CMRS provider. Contrary to the assertions of these commenters, the use of LATAs to determine equal access obligations will not eliminate extended local calling areas. As the commenters themselves note, I rural territories have already been consolidated into single calling areas and the court overseeing the Modification of Final Judgment has permitted the

Accord LDDS at 16; CSA at 4; Allnet at 6; NYNEX at 9; MCI at 8.

In this regard, the Commission should require that IS-41 capability be made available by all CMRS providers to ensure complete equal access. See AT&T at 10, n.15.

<u>Accord</u> Allnet at 5; MCI at 3-4; LDDS at 18-19; WilTel at 13; NYNEX at 8. <u>See also</u> BellSouth at 38; Bell Atlantic at 12.

^{89/} See, e.g., Southwestern Bell at 37-42; Pacific Bell at 4-7.

Even if some local calling areas are curtailed, the availability of multiple interexchange carriers to carry traffic will ensure that consumers pay a competitive rate for service between calling areas.

^{91/} Southwestern Bell at 37-38.

consolidation of numerous cellular service areas that cross LATA boundaries. 22/ As a general rule, however, the goals of equal access and regulatory parity are best served by utilizing LATAs rather than metropolitan trading areas or carrier-designed local service areas 23/ that will only exacerbate disparities between providers of equivalent CMRS.

CONCLUSION

The imposition of interconnection obligations on CMRS providers is neither necessary nor desirable. It would provide no public benefits, while imposing significant costs and inefficiencies on the offering of commercial mobile radio services and the development of the national wireless infrastructure. By contrast, the uniform imposition of equal access requirement

<u>See also AT&T/McCaw Consent Decree at § II.</u> (defining local cellular service to include 19 areas consisting of more than one LATA).

^{93/} See Southwestern Bell at 44-45; BellSouth at 38.

on all CMRS providers would enhance competition and consumer choice in interexchange telecommunications. The Commission should adopt rules to implement such a policy.

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